

# **System Configuration Team (SCT)**

## **Meeting Notes January 16, 2003**

### ***1. Greetings and Introductions.***

The January 16, 2003 meeting of the System Configuration Team was held at the National Marine Fisheries Service offices in Portland, Oregon. The meeting was chaired by Bill Hevlin of NMFS and facilitated by Richard Forester. The agenda and a list of attendees for the meeting are attached as Enclosures A and B. Hevlin read a round of introductions, a review of the agenda and the notes from the latest SCT meeting.

The following is a distillation (not a verbatim transcript) of items discussed at the meeting, together with actions taken on those items. Please note that some enclosures referenced may be too lengthy to routinely include with the meeting notes; copies of all enclosures referred to in the minutes are available upon request from Kathy Ceballos of NMFS at 503/230-5420.

### ***2. Fish Facilities Design Review Work Group (FFDRWG) Updates.***

Rock Peters briefed the group on the items discussed at the most recent Portland District FFDRWG meeting on January 7. These projects, summarized in a handout (Enc. C) included:

- Bonneville JBS follow-on
- Bonneville 2 FGE
- Bonneville survival and FPE
- Bonneville corner collector (see Enc. C for details)
- The Dalles survival and FPE
- The Dalles SGID
- The Dalles adult collection channel dewatering
- The Dalles powerhouse rehab
- The Dalles configuration study
- John Day FPE/survival
- John Day ESBS
- John Day south shore fish jumping
- Next FFRDWG meeting: March 27.

There were a few clarifying questions and comments about this information; overall,

Peters emphasized that construction on all projects is going extremely well, with few if any problems or delays to report. Again, please refer to Enclosure C for the current status of each project. In response to a question from Hevlin, Mike Mason said the Walla Walla District FFDRWG has not met since the last SCT meeting; the next meeting of the Walla Walla group is scheduled for next week.

Hevlin said there was an SCT/FFDRWG subcommittee meeting in Walla Walla two weeks ago, to discuss configuration planning at the Lower Snake projects and McNary Dam and planning for the spring 2003 removable spillway weir (RSW) evaluation at Lower Granite. As a first step, said Hevlin, we did some project-by-project brainstorming about possible juvenile and adult passage improvements; we also discussed potential system improvements. A follow-up meeting on the Lower Snake/McNary configuration planning process is scheduled for January 21.

With respect to the Lower Granite RSW test this spring, said Hevlin, the consensus at the meeting was that people would like to see the powerhouse collector removed this winter, although Bonneville was concerned about the potential costs associated with the fact that, if the powerhouse collector is removed, only one or two turbines will be able to operate at Lower Granite. However, Bonneville ultimately agreed to the removal of the powerhouse collector, because they want to see the results from a stand-alone RSW test this spring, Hevlin said.

However, said Kim Fodrea, if the water supply forecasts continue to degrade, there may not be enough water to do a test this spring. Steve Pettit said that, in IDFG's view, it is too soon to make a decision about whether or not the stand-alone RSW test should go forward this spring; even if flows are low and we have to do mass transport from Lower Granite, he said, we could still have a test of that device. Hevlin said NMFS agrees that a scaled-down test may be possible this spring, even if flows are low.

Pettit said IDFG's main concern is the fact that, if there is no RSW test at Lower Granite this spring, that could delay the decision to move forward with RSW testing and construction at Ice Harbor. Fodrea replied that Bonneville's concern is that the 2003 test would be compromised so much that it will cause a delay in the accelerated RSW program anyway. That's one of the reasons we've been asking the region, what is the minimum test that would be required to continue with the accelerated RSW plans? she said.

One problem with removing the powerhouse collector is that Bonneville will lose power revenue because of the need to shut of Units 4, 5 and 6 at Lower Granite this winter while divers are in the water, Hevlin said. Kevin Crum said the Corps has received an acceptable bid for this project and believes the contractor will be able to perform as long as the contract is awarded in a timely manner. The discussion of how much power revenue loss will be necessary in order to remove the Lower Granite SBC is ongoing, he said; Unit 3 is currently down for service, and Unit 1 will be out for the duration of the removal project. In other words, he said, there will be periods of time during the removal project when only one unit -- Unit 2 -- is available at Lower Granite. That may be enough capacity, given the type of water year this is shaping up to be, but it is likely that, as flows come up in February and March, there will be some periods when spill

would become necessary. Crum added that Unit 3 is scheduled to be back on-line in early March; with two and potentially three units available, he said, that eases the situation somewhat. And what is the time-frame for the SBC removal? Ron Boyce asked. The contractor will have until April 1 to complete the removal project, Crum replied, with four to six weeks of actual in-water work time.

A lengthy debate ensued, with the SCT discussing whether or not the SBC removal project should proceed this year, as well as the validity of the RSW test results at both Lower Granite and Ice Harbor given expected low-flow and low-spill conditions. Fodrea noted that a BPA/COE conference call to discuss the possibility of deferring the SBC removal until next year is scheduled for tomorrow. After a few minutes of additional discussion, the SCT agreed to abide by the decision reached at tomorrow's conference call. Hevlin noted, however, that the SCT strongly recommends that the Lower Granite SBC removal take place as scheduled this year if at all possible, rather than delaying the project until next fall. Rebecca Kalamasz added that the RSW study designs for both Lower Granite and Ice Harbor will be discussed extensively at an SRWG meeting in Walla Walla on January 22-23.

There is another issue related to this one, said Hevlin – the \$750,000 in FY'03 funding for the design team to continue working on the Ice Harbor RSW. This is BPA's proposal for an accelerated study of RSW at Ice Harbor, he said, noting that his goal was to reach a decision on this item at today's meeting.

Hevlin reminded the group that \$250,000 in FY'02 funding has already been earmarked on the design for this project; a further \$750,000 is needed to continue the work in FY'03. That's what we need to have the design in place for a decision in October 2003, John Kranda said. Crum noted that the original \$250,000, intended to allow the Corps to get a jump on this project, has not yet been spent; there are also resource and manpower issues at the moment, he said, which raise doubts about our ability simply to assign the necessary manpower to this project. The bottom line is that we may not need another \$750,000 for this project in FY'03, he said -- another \$400,000 in FY'03 funds might be adequate. The other issue is that this project is tied to the 2003 RSW test at Lower Granite, Kranda said; if there is no test at Lower Granite this year, we won't need to accelerate the design work at Ice Harbor.

Various SCT members expressed their support for this project; David Wills observed that, at yesterday's Power Planning Council meeting, the Corps had stated their intention to continue with the RSW fast-track program, even going so far as to say that the SCT supports this program. Hevlin noted that Rod Woodin continues to tell him Washington does not support spending FY'03 CRFM funds on this project, because of the concern that the Corps will be spending money that could be used elsewhere in the program on a design that ultimately won't be used. After a brief discussion, however, there was general agreement among the SCT members present that the additional funding be made available to allow the Ice Harbor RSW design project to continue forward in FY'03, based on Kranda's assurance that providing \$400,000 in FY'03 funds will not detrimentally impact funding for any of the other projects the SCT has already approved.

There are two other accelerated programs on the funding list, said Hevlin; my understanding is that we've made a decision on them at previous SCT meetings. The first project is The Dalles forebay guidance curtain; my understanding from the Corps is that they are not ready to spend any FY'03 funds on that project, so that decision is deferred until FY'04. Actually, I would characterize it a little differently, said Peters – November was our cutoff to buy the equipment needed to do the radio-tag forebay behavior study in FY'03, and since we didn't do so, the study isn't possible at this time. I guess the way to phrase it is that we're no longer accelerating this project, Kranda said.

How, then, should we phrase the SCT's response to BPA's proposal? Hevlin asked – deferred to FY'04 because of the inability to acquire the test equipment by the November deadline? Actually, the reason we didn't acquire the equipment was that the SCT declined to support the accelerated project, Fodrea observed. And the reason the support wasn't there was that we were uncertain about our ability to get this device in place in time to help BPA within the rate case period, which ends in 2006, Kranda said. We still think The Dalles forebay guidance curtain may be a good idea; we're just continuing with the project on a normal, rather than an accelerated, schedule.

The other accelerated project is the Lower Monumental RSW, Hevlin said; my understanding is that it would be scheduled for completion a year after Ice Harbor is done. In other words, he said, if we can get the Ice Harbor RSW in place by 2005, the Lower Monumental RSW would be done by 2006. That would be the last year of the rate case, said Ken Barnhart, so it would still help Bonneville if we could complete construction at Lower Monumental by that time. Kranda noted that completing the Ice Harbor design work will yield efficiency benefits for the Lower Monumental design as well. It sounds, then, as though staying on track to complete the Lower Monumental RSW by 2006 will not require additional FY'03 funds, Hevlin said; however, this conceptual phase of the Ice Harbor project will contribute to the Lower Monumental design down the road.

The group also discussed the Lower Monumental stilling basin repairs, which should be completed on schedule, in time for that facility to provide spill in the spring of 2003. It would be ironic if there was no spill at that project this year due to low runoff and/or Bonneville's financial problems, one participant observed. Boyce said it would be helpful for the SCT to have a list of the studies that may not be done either because low water conditions will invalidate the test results or preclude a test altogether, or because BPA cannot support them revenue-wise. That would be very useful, he said, in terms of reprogramming CRFM funds into other areas.

### ***3. Studies Review Work Group (SRWG) Update.***

Hevlin noted that it would make sense to discuss the feasibility of a scaled-back Lower Monumental spillway efficiency/survival test in 2003 at next week's SRWG meeting, given the likelihood of a low water year. We were unable to do many of the studies planned last year due to Bonneville's financial condition, which is even worse this year, said Boyce – it's unrealistic to think we're going to be able to do many of these studies, given that reality. Personally, he said, I think we need to get ahead of that ball by having those discussions earlier in this year's process.

What you're recommending, then, and what NMFS would support, is asking Bonneville to develop a list of those studies that would need to be scaled back, deferred or abandoned if it's a low-flow year, in BPA's opinion, Hevlin said. Fodrea replied that it may be possible for Bonneville to develop such a list, but cautioned that given the number of variables involved, it won't be a firm yes-or-no list. There is a meeting on January 21 to discuss this very topic, Peters observed. This topic will also be discussed at next week's meeting in Walla Walla, Hevlin added.

Tom Lorz noted that CRITFC and the Corps recently held a special meeting to discuss the most contentious Portland District research proposals for FY'03; he asked about the status of the contentious Walla Walla District studies CRITFC has identified. Hevlin replied that Rebecca Kalamascz had sent him a memo titled "Anadromous Fish Evaluation Program FY'03 Preliminary Proposal Status – Walla Walla November 2002" (Enc. D); this is essentially Walla Walla District's response to the comments received at that meeting, he said. Peters noted that the two main contentious study proposals are the flume study and the acoustic camera study; both have been revised to reflect the concerns heard at the meeting. Peters asked that comments on these revised studies be submitted to him as soon as possible.

#### ***4. FY'03 CRFM Program.***

Kranda said the Congressional appropriations process is now moving forward, adding that he may know as soon as tomorrow what the final FY'03 CRFM appropriation is going to be. The House and Senate have proposed \$85 million and \$87 million, respectively, so the final number should be somewhere between those two.

Kranda then distributed the most recent version of the FY'03 CRFM Measures Worksheet, dated January 14. He noted that some of the cost estimates have been revised upward or downward since the last SCT meeting; these changes have been highlighted in grey. There is little change to the total cost of the program overall, Kranda said. It was agreed to discuss this topic further at the next meeting of the group.

#### ***5. Next SCT Meeting Date.***

The next meeting of the System Configuration Team was set for Thursday, February 20. Meeting summary prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.